

SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

30 March 1953

SUBJECT: SE-40: PROBABLE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO A "VOLUNTEER  
FREEDOM CORPS" (VFC)  
(Staff Draft for Consideration by the Board)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable Communist reactions to the organization of a Volunteer Freedom Corps composed of units of Satellite Europeans attached to the US Army and under the command of American officers.

DISCUSSION

1. We believe that the Kremlin will probably consider the organization of a VFC as part of a long-term US program to free the European Satellites from Soviet control. The Kremlin will almost certainly regard a VFC as another indication that the US is preparing to attack the Bloc, but we estimate that the Kremlin will not consider establishment of a VFC as evidence that an attack upon the Bloc is imminent.

2. The Kremlin will almost certainly estimate that the US will not be able to expand a VFC into a large and effective military

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force. At least initially, it will probably regard a VFC as a system for the recruitment of agents for espionage and for sabotage activities within the Satellites.

3. On the other hand, the Kremlin will almost certainly consider a VFC an effective US psychological weapon providing a firm commitment of US intentions to free the Satellite peoples. If a VFC should be used effectively in a UN action in Korea, or in some other local operation outside of Europe, the Kremlin would probably estimate that such an action would adversely affect Kremlin control over the Satellites.

4. The Kremlin probably estimates that organizing a VFC will be difficult, and that maintaining such a corps over a long period of time will constitute a hazardous program for the US, failure in which would seriously hamper US political warfare directed against the Bloc. It may also estimate that the establishment of a VFC will increase the strains upon relations between the US and its allies and that the psychological advantage gained by the US among the Satellite peoples will be outweighed by the dissension created within the Allies.

5. We do not believe that the establishment of a VFC and the accompanying propaganda campaign will lead the Kremlin either to adopt courses of action involving grave risk of war or involving

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concessions designed to relax current tensions. However, the Kremlin will almost certainly give the impression of greater alarm than it actually feels.

6. The Communists will attempt to strengthen the controls over flight from the Satellites. They will almost certainly use terror against relatives and friends of members of a VFC, and they will increase their restrictions upon the Satellite armed forces. They will also seek to infiltrate a VFC and to destroy its effectiveness by terrorizing and intimidating its members.

7. The Communists will almost certainly reply to the US program with a heavy propaganda barrage, within and beyond the Bloc, along the lines currently being used against the Kersten amendment. The Satellites regimes will probably bear the burden of the campaign within international organizations such as the UN, charging US interference in their internal affairs and peaceful pursuits and labelling this US action as preparation for attack. The national Communist Parties outside the Bloc, particularly those in Western Europe, will give the VFC a high priority in their propaganda.

8. The governments of those Satellites whose nationals are organized into VFC units may threaten to break diplomatic relations with the US when the US campaign is announced. These governments

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may even break diplomatic relations with the US when the campaign gets under way. The Kremlin will probably use the threat of eliminating all US connections in Eastern Europe in its effort to check the US program.

9. If a VFC program should fail, the Communists would make sustained use of that failure to convince the Satellite peoples that the US was unable to help them and that the US would lose interest in freeing them.

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